



TAPUITEA

The Official Newsletter of the American Samoa Government



IA MANINO LE FOLAUGA

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American Samoa's 123rd Flag Day Celebration

American Samoa has not celebrated its Flag Day for the last two years due to COVID-19. This year's Flag Day festivities revived the *Fautasi* fever, unified congregations and villages, and brought back High School marching bands. In his opening remarks, Governor Lemanu reminded the people of American Samoa about the sacrifices of our forefathers and ancestors to protect our freedom. The annual Flag Day celebration is a reflection of our ancestors' hard work, the pastors' prayers, the endless support from neighboring islands, and our Toa o Samoa's commitment to serving our country. He referenced one of the last sentences of the American Samoa National Anthem, "*Tautua ma punou I lou malo, ia manuia ia uluola, Amerika Samoa o le nu'u o le Sa'olotoga*" as a reminder of our duty to our country.

In closing, Governor Lemanu shared that "As generations come and go, as the world turns, our freedom and way of life changes,



we must band together, strong as ever before, and hold on to our forefather's dream. Freedom is not free" He reminded us that we all must preserve and protect our freedom. He quoted Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address from 1863, "It is us for the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion".

New Army recruits were sworn in during Governor Lemanu's special remarks. Governor Lemanu reminded the young recruits to always remember that they are Samoans. He thanked the recruiters and parents for supporting the young recruits in their journey to serve our country. Governor Lemanu congratulated the young recruits and their families.



Red Cross also celebrated its 100 years of Service. Governor Lemanu extended his gratitude to Red Cross for their continuous support to the people of American Samoa and around the world. At the conclusion of the Flag Day event, the American Samoa government presented a check of \$100,000 as a donation to the Red Cross.



The Veterans Memorial Stadium in Tafuna was packed with various businesses and members of the private sector, ASG Departments and agencies, high school marching bands, and sports groups who participated in the parade. Following the parade, the Catholic, Methodist, and London Missionary Society (LMS) congregations in American Samoa performed dances and songs on the malae.



Lt. Governor presented the closing remarks followed by the awards ceremony.



Third Atoa o Samoa Opening and Executive Meeting



A customary ‘ava ceremony was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, to officially mark the opening of the third Atoa o Samoa executive meeting at the American Samoa Community College Multipurpose Center in Malaeimi. The meeting was attended by the Governor of American Samoa, Honorable Lemanu Palepoi Sialega Mauga; the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, Honorable Fiaame Naomi Mata’afa and their respective delegations; Lieutenant Governor of American Samoa, Honorable Talauega Eleasalo Va’alele Ale; President of the Senate, Honorable Tualo M. Fruean; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Honorable Savali T. Ale and their respective legislators. The opening prayer was delivered by Reverend Elder Dr. Aumalesulu Tuifalefa.

In their special remarks, co-chairs Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga, and Honorable Prime Minister Fiaame Naomi Mataafa reaffirmed their commitment

to strengthening cooperation between the two Samoas and forging relations to improve mutually beneficial partnerships. “The Atoa o Samoa offers an ideal platform to chart a path forward for the mutual benefit of our island countries, ushering a new chapter in Samoan Relations. This recurring Atoa o Samoa Conference demonstrates our commitment to fostering greater mutual trust, building consensus, expanding cooperation, and fortifying our bond,” Governor Lemanu stated in his opening remarks. He continued, “Acting on the important consensus, we continue to stand ready to collaborate to further promote high-level exchanges and expand practical cooperation in order to build a stronger shared future. We hope to maintain long-term friendly in-depth exchange of views and other issues of mutual interest that will lead to increased bilateral relations and cooperation in critical areas.”

“The intention remains clear,” Prime Minister Fiaame stated in her special remarks.

She continued, “We should continue to collaborate and consolidate our positions on what we will reap mutual benefits for all our people. The Atoa o Samoa framework can be a unique partnership for the benefit of all our peoples and our extensive diasporas globally. We must ensure that it works well and has sustained benefits for all - if changes are deemed necessary, let’s not turn away from them.”

This third meeting reported on the progress made since Apia in 2022 as several agencies have interchanged visits and exchanged personnel, and are working towards progressing priority issues. Key issues discussed in the two-day meeting included Health, Economy, Information and Communication Technology, Immigration, Agriculture and Fisheries, Finance, Environment, Climate, Weather & Geoscience, Transportation, and Land Swap Agreement.

Progress from last Atoa o Samoa are as follows:

- The Department of Commerce, in partnership with its Samoa counterpart, the Samoa Business Hub, and the American Samoa Chamber of Commerce, hosted the first Atoa o Samoa Trade Show. In prior discussions, both Samoas agreed on the necessity of developing and promoting trade. The Atoa o Samoa Trade Show promoted locally-made goods and services between the two countries, and a platform for mutual investment and expansion.
- The American Samoa Territorial Audit Office hosted its Audit and Ethics Training conducted by the Graduate School, USA. The audit offices from Samoa and American Samoa came together to complete this three-day training session. As a result, Su'a, Pauga & Associates accounting firm can now provide accounting services in American Samoa and can register as public accountants, allowing them to sit in the US CPA for accreditation in order to become chartered accountants that can work in the private sector in American Samoa.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the American Samoa Telecommunications Authority and the Samoa Ministry of Communications centered on increasing training capacity and reducing broadband costs for Samoa, securing redundancy, and providing an alternative route to New Zealand & Australia for Samoa via the Hawaiki Cable system.



- Discussion continues between the SROS, AS-EPA, and US EPA in information exchange on Laboratory services. The US EPA has responded positively and supports this initiative due to the logistical challenges to their regular engagement in American Samoa.
- The American Samoa Government is looking into (1) developing possible training opportunities with various academic institutions in Samoa pertaining to maritime engineering (2) offering training to the Samoa Airport Authority at its Hot Fire Training Facility.
- The Taumeasina Land Lease and the Tafuna Land Lease were finalized and signed by the respective parties.
- The next Atoa o Samoa executive meeting will be held in October 2023 in Savai'i. Actual dates to be confirmed at a later date

Immediately after the adjournment of the meeting, the two Samoas participated in an exchange of gifts to include fine mats, tuna, cocoa, fish, bananas, sausages and taros.



Atoa o Samoa Site Visits



Site visits to several government and private sectors key developments hosted by various leaders of the American Samoa Government for the Samoa delegation. Kicking off the beginning of the third Atoa o Samoa executive meeting.

On Tuesday, April 11, 2023, the Honorable Fiame Naomi Mataafa, Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, along with the Samoa delegation, arrived safely in Pago Pago, American Samoa for the third Atoa o Samoa executive meeting. The utility of site visits was first initiated by the Samoa government in 2022 and now repeated in 2023 to continue discussions with counterpart departments, agencies and key development sectors. The area of focus are as follows along with the relevant departments:

1. *Environment, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Connectivity*

- EPA, ODAPM, DPA, ASTCA, ASPA, TEO, DPW

2. *Health*

- DOH, LBJ, DYWA, DPR, DOE, DHSS

3. *Economy*

- DOC, DMWR, DOA, DHR, ASVB

4. *Finance, Immigration, Border Security, and Law Enforcement*

- DLA, TR, DHS, DPS, SAR, DC, TAO

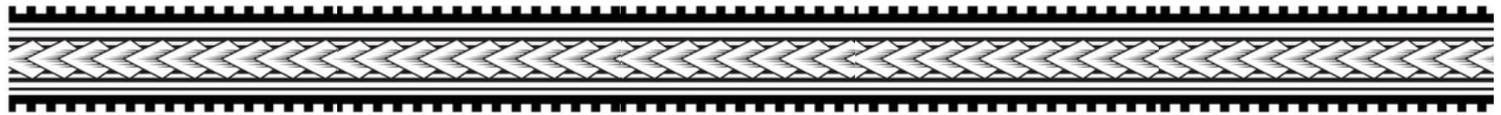
Several ASG departments and agencies were grouped together into relevant focus areas and visited the following sites with their Samoa counterparts:

- Airport Rescue & Firefighting (ARFF)
- DHS Emergency Operation Center
- DHS Siren
- ASPA Water Filtration Plant
- Tour of McConnell Dowell Creative Construction and Continental Transport Corporation
- Tour of the ASPA Green Building
- Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center
- Public Health Headquarters
- StarKist
- Dragon Fruit Farm
- Lions Park (New Development)
- Tutuila Greens (Business)
- Customs Building (K-9 Unit)
- DHS Fusion Center

- DSAR Marine Patrol
- Immigration Office
- Treasury Conference Room

As allowed by the Atoa o Samoa executive meetings, existing conversations between the two governments will continue at the Taskforce level, to direct and inform further ways and best practices to establish and agree on concerns in considerations, which will contribute to enhanced prospective collaborative and better partnerships. The Atoa o Samoa is a platform that allows both Samoas to mutually establish cooperative efforts to strengthen disease surveillance and management of diseases, collaborate and share training opportunities, and encourage and promote data sharing and research opportunities.

A dinner hosted by the respective departments concluded a productive day of proactive conversations and idea sharing.



First Lady Ella and Good Lady Marian Celebrate Women's History Month

On March 30th, 2023, First Lady Ella Mauga and Good Lady Marian Ale hosted the culmination event in honor of Women's History Month at the Rex H. Lee Auditorium in Utulei. The theme of the evening was “Celebrating Women Who Tell Stories,” or “Fa’atauaina o Tina ma Tama’ita’i ma o latou sao.” Women of various communities of American Samoa were in attendance, and the guest of honor from the Independent State of Samoa, Afioga Filifilia Tamasese, Masiofo Tama Aiga Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi. The Master of Ceremonies Peseta Tia Seloti anchored the ceremony for the evening. The Invocation and Benediction was conducted by Faletua Patricia Fuiava.



“**Many women who constructed our way of life are no longer present, but their dedication reverberates in our communities today. American Samoa was built on their wisdom and their whispers of encouragement.**”

A special tribute presentation and musical selection was performed by First Lady Ella to celebrate the women pioneers of the past. She remarked, “Women are the epitome of strength and courage, and are the true architects of our society. The bravery and sacrifice the Samoan women make is reflected in the biblical story of Queen Esther to Mordecai when she quoted ‘And if I perish, I perish.’” First Lady Ella continued, “Many women who constructed our way of life are no longer present, but their dedication reverberates in our communities today. American Samoa was built on their wisdom and their whispers of encouragement.”



The guests enjoyed an extravagant evening commemorating the stories of iconic women, singing and dancing, musical performances, and encouraging conversations of the significance of Samoan women.

In her special remarks, Masiofo Filifilia described her life growing up and the women she was impacted by. She commended the First Lady and Good Lady for their efforts in paying tribute to Samoan women who have built our governments, and shaped our way of life. Good Lady Marian delivered her final remarks commending all the guests for their accomplishments, camaraderie, and for their dedication to American Samoa.





Aua nei taofi Sa His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi



On April 3, 2023, Chief of Staff Loa Tuimavave T. Laupola and several staff members joined their Highnesses Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi and Masiofo Filifilia Tamasese for a discussion about their perspective on the retention of the Samoan language, preserving the Samoan culture, climate change, leadership, and Tui Atua's writings. His Highness Tui Atua importance of youth and parents' responsibility to work together, communicate, build reflected on one of his special remarks presented to the Catholic Youth of Samoa in Apia entitled after a Samoan proverb, "O le I'a iti'iti le Igaga, ae a'ea afu loloto". Tui Atua discussed the relationships and have an appreciation for our environment. There will be challenges, but Tui Atua reminded the youth to persevere through life hurdles. The honorable Tui Atua exemplifies his mau or one of his guiding statements "Aua ne'i taofi sa", sharing the wealth of knowledge and wisdom with the next generation. "When we pass on, the next generation will tell these stories", said Tui Atua.

His Highness Tui Atua reminisced about his experience last weekend when he stepped foot on Manu'a's sacred lands for the first time. Tui Atua shared that he would not forgive himself if he did not pay his respects and tribute to the ancestors and the people of Manu'a. "Manu'a is dear to my heart." Tui Atua shared that he has ties to Manu'a and that Masiofo Filifili's parents served as pastors in Tau, Manu'a. The discussion concluded with singing and listening to the songs of the village of Asau, Savaii as they tell the stories of Tui Atua's lineage.

Chief and Commanding General Lieutenant General Jody J. Daniels Visits American Samoa

On March 31st, 2023, and for visiting with the Honorable Lemanu P. S. Mauga, Governor of American Samoa, First Lady Ella Mauga, and esteemed members of the American Samoa Government, hosted a traditional Ava Ceremony to welcome Lieutenant General (LTG) Jody J. Daniels and Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Andrew Lambardo of the United States Army Reserve and Command, and their team. The group arrived in American Samoa Thursday evening, March 30th, 2023.

LTG Jody Daniels, Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command is on island to visit with military units and local leaders of American Samoa to understand the operational environment the American Samoa soldiers face, in support of the IndoPacific Command mission.

During the Ava Ceremony, Governor Lemanu expressed his gratitude to LTG Daniels for her visit. "It is an honor to meet the very first woman to serve as Chief and Commanding General of the US Army Reserve," remarked Governor Lemanu. "We thank you, and CSM Lombardo, and your team for your service a

soldiers of American Samoa," he continued.

LTG Jody J. Daniels is serving as the 34th Chief of the United States Army Reserve, and the 9th Commanding General, United States Army Reserve Command since 2020. Her awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, three Legions of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, five Meritorious Service Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, four Army Commendation Medals, Joint Service Achievement Medal, two Army Achievement Medals, and the Combat Action Badge. CSM Andrew Lambardo serves as the 14th Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army Reserve.

Senior Enlisted advisor CSM Andrew Lombardo is to reinforce the command team's full support of the Army Reserve's commitment to American Samoa. The Pacific remains our nation's priority theater, and we will prioritize its most essential value; the people who live and work within it.

Mobile 5G Signal Broadcast and Commercial Test



Where the road ends, 5G begins!

On Saturday, April 15, beginning in the village of Poloa, ASTCA again makes history in the Emerging Island Nations of Polynesia. Your #HomeTeam has become the first telecom company in the Samoan archipelago and nearby Island nations to broadcast a 5G umbrella service over its commercial network.

First revealed during our retail store's facelift dedication ceremony in October 2022, the leadership team of your "New ASTCA" began American Samoa's first 5G network in early 2022. De-signed to deliver more speed, more network capacity, and lower latency, 5G will empower our economy with more opportunities. Beginning in Poloa with the installation of 5G radio equipment, your technical team has been building the physical infrastructure and slotting network servers throughout the year. Today, Saturday, April 15th, 2023, we turn it on, marking ASTCA and American Samoa's first 5G commercial experience.

As recent innovations before it, from Hawaiki and the Territory's first High Definition Television (HDTV) Service, the ASTCA #HomeTeam continues its mission of putting people first and serving as a catalyst for economic development in the territory, closing the technology gap between American Samoa and the United States.

The leadership team of today's ASTCA, under CEO Chuck Leota, is hyper-focused on improving outcomes for all American Samoans and residents of the Territory. *"Our goal is not just to keep American Samoa relevant in the new digital economy. Today's ASTCA does not want to build infrastructure so our people just survive... instead, we want our people to thrive and fully participate in the new global digital economy. ASTCA wants to ensure digital equity for our people by having maximum coverage and affordability... and ensure everyone has access to online information, has the tools for education, healthcare, and can make a living... without having to leave American Samoa. As your #HomeTeam, we want nobody left behind."*

With the success of our commercial 5G test and signal broadcasting, ASTCA will now move towards commercially launching 5G service to its subscribers, gradually activating the service around the island. Follow us on our 5G journey to a tower near you!



MyASTCA

Samoa Deputy Prime Minister and American Samoa Veterans Association Meets to Support U.S. Veterans in Samoa



On April 18, 2023, the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), Tuala Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio who is a veteran of the Royal New Zealand Army met with the American Samoa Veterans Association to discuss and calibrate on how to support U.S. Service members that are residing in Samoa. An outreach in Samoa to register all U.S. Service members and identify opportunities to help support these individuals while living in Samoa was discussed in the meeting.

DPM Ponifasio is the president of the Samoa Returned Services Association. He served in the Royal New Zealand Army from 2004-2008 and received the rank of captain. DPM Ponifasio is excited to partner with Governor Lemanu and to carry out these efforts for U.S. Veterans and renew relations that were once established before. The meeting concluded with an invitation for the celebration of the ANZAC day on April 24, 2023. This celebration is similar to U.S. Veterans Day which is celebrated annually on November 11.





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APRIL PROCLAMATIONS

Child Abuse Prevention Month

123rd American Samoa Flag Day

American Samoa Medical Lab
Professionals Week

APRIL EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Establishing Broadband Coordination
(repealing EO 006-2023)

Establishing American Samoa Innovation
Authority

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 23 Army Reserve Birthday

April 22 Earth Day

April 24-28 Arbor Week

May 01-05 Teacher Appreciation Week

May 07-12 Nurse Appreciation Week

May 14-20 Public Safety Week

